

## Colleges Need To Do More To Cut Costs

A January 30, 2012, *Chronicle of Higher Education* report is worthy of review and comment: “College Officials Welcome Obama’s [Focus on Higher-Education Costs](#), but Raise Some Concerns.”

“[President Obama] warned that colleges themselves needed to do more to cut costs and not assume they can “just jack up tuition every single year.” Government “can’t just keep on subsidizing skyrocketing tuition,” he said.

I commented:

“Get detailed financial records as we have at [www.usmnews](http://www.usmnews) through open record requests and you’ll see just how inefficient and spendthrift university administrators are. (We recently received records for 2011 and will report the details of 2011 airplane trips and costs.) A problem is that most folks don’t want to study the details. If you do, take a look, for example, at the waste of University of Southern Mississippi’s President Martha Saunders. She bought a multi-million dollar airplane with taxpayer/student money during a recession and faculty layoffs. She claimed the cost was \$800 per flight hour. USM’s own records, which we provide in [usmnews.net](http://usmnews.net), the cash outflow cost is approx \$5,500 per flight hour and when a balloon payment, which is required at end of lease/purchase, is factored in, the cost per flight hour is over \$8,000. And, what is the plane used for? According to the pilot flight logs, it’s used to transport VIPs and family to, among other activities, sports events.

So, before claims are made that universities are efficient, review the detailed financial records, then make your representations about the specific school you’ve studied.”

Many readers liked the comment. An example:

“Great thanks, Chauncey. I’ve gone more and more to despair in recent years regarding the masses of students across the U.S. who flock to biz ed at the exclusion of everything else. And yet you show, nicely, most honorable ethics, and conscience, even in that profession.

Sorry if this posting may seem patronizing but, you know, the Citizen United culture now prevails. Money trumps. Prez O surrounds himself only with befrienders of high finance. And the Martha Saunders profligate you mention is only one instance of many, many among U admin everywhere who give themselves bonuses, increased perks, pay raises, bloated staffs, office renovations -- a corporate-only world for which millions of students pay by getting part-time, temp instructors, ghettoized

departments, and for all this indebting themselves to the ethics-free and most-amoral of high finance.”